United Nations S/2002/557

Security Council

Distr.: General
21 May 2002

Original: English

Letter dated 20 May 2002 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Sierra Leone to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit the "Address to the Nation" by Alhaji Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, following his oath of office as President of the Republic of Sierra Leone for a second term (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Allieu I. **Kanu**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Deputy Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 20 May 2002 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Sierra Leone to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Address by Alhaji Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah following his oath of office as President of the Republic of Sierra Leone for a second term

Freetown, 19 May 2002

The people have spoken. They have made what I described two weeks ago as one of the most far-reaching decisions in the current history of Sierra Leone. They have chosen the men and women whom they would like not just to lead, but more importantly to serve this nation in the next five years. They did it the democratic way — freely, transparently and peacefully.

Let me therefore start by congratulating the entire electorate for successfully demonstrating to the rest of Africa and the world at large that Sierra Leone is indeed a democracy and that we are determined to resume our status as a model of peace, stability and democracy in the African continent.

I should also like to congratulate all the political parties and their candidates, especially those who ran for the highest offices in the land as Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates. You should all be commended for a great effort.

In these elections that we all agreed were not a war but a friendly contest, there are no losers. As a matter of fact we should all consider ourselves winners. We are all winners because, irrespective of the results, we succeeded in making this one of the most violence-free electoral processes in Sierra Leone since independence. So to you my former contestants, be assured that there is a place for each and every one of you in the service of your country. I say this because the privilege of serving the people is not limited to a seat in Parliament, or occupancy of State House and The Lodge. You know, as I do, that there are other seats, offices and positions available in all sectors of our country from where we can each make a contribution to improving the lives of our fellow compatriots. There are also important and positive roles that each individual can play in helping us achieve that objective.

Those who care, and I have no doubt that we all do, need not be reminded that we have a lot of work to do in this country, and that no single political party, no single Government can do it alone. I would therefore like to appeal to you, whatever your party affiliation, whatever your party symbol, and whatever your ideology, to join me in building a new coalition for national development. It was our right and responsibility to vote. It is also our right and collective responsibility to work together in raising the standard of living and quality of life of all Sierra Leoneans. I trust that I can count on your cooperation.

To my fellow compatriots, I say be assured that I am aware of the heavy responsibility you have given me to serve you for another five years. By re-electing me you have made it clear that you acknowledge the great transformation that we are already experiencing, especially since the formal end of the disarmament and demobilization process. You have also made it clear that you have confidence in my

experience and ability to build on the gains we have made so far. For this I am sincerely grateful.

In this connection, I should emphasize that the election is a free choice, which should not bring retribution against anyone based on the choice he or she made. Therefore, no person, no occupational group, no chiefdom or district in the country should entertain any doubt as to the attention it will get from my Government vis-à-vis others in our country. All Sierra Leone is my constituency.

Six years ago my principal objective was centred on peace — the right of every Sierra Leonean to live in peace and security. I made a pledge to do everything in my power to seek an end to the rebel war and to bring peace to our country. We have already begun to reap the benefits of this transformation. But there are other priorities on the national agenda that we must tackle more vigorously.

Fellow Sierra Leoneans, my own principal objective on this second leg of our journey together is also centred on a basic human right — the right to food. So, today, with the new mandate you have given me, I should make another pledge. This time I pledge to work harder and with greater resolve to do everything in my power to ensure that within the next five years no Sierra Leonean should go to bed hungry. We must have the capacity to feed ourselves. We will therefore place proper emphasis on agriculture. This objective is consistent with my enduring commitment to the reduction of poverty in our society and the creation of jobs and other opportunities, particularly for our women and the youth, so that they can realize their full potential.

In the next few weeks I shall present, through your new representatives in Parliament, details of my strategy for achieving this objective.

Fellow Sierra Leoneans, we all acknowledge that corruption has over a long period been eating deep into the fabric of our society. This is why I requested the help of the Government of the United Kingdom to establish the Anti-Corruption Commission. This is also why the Right Honourable Mrs. Claire Short, Minister for International Development of the United Kingdom, was here a short while ago to encourage all Sierra Leoneans to cooperate in the fight against corruption. This fight against corruption will continue to be one of my major preoccupations and I will expect you to join me in this fight.

To our friends and partners in the international community the conduct of the elections should serve as an expression of our gratitude for their support in getting us through the process peacefully. I should like to assure them that the investments they have made in Sierra Leone will continue to yield similar positive results in the near future.

As members of the international community know, the people of Sierra Leone have already demonstrated their resilience under extremely difficult circumstances. For over ten years they struggled to rid themselves of the terror and scourge of a brutal rebellion. They stood firm against the tyranny of military juntas and military/rebel regimes. They fought valiantly for the restoration of democracy. In this regard, I am sure that the people of Sierra Leone have earned the admiration of the international community. They have convinced the world that Sierra Leone is worth all the support and cooperation the international community can muster to facilitate political stability, security and sustainable development in this country.

Finally, to my fellow Sierra Leoneans, let me remind ourselves that elections, important as they are, are not an end in themselves. Now that we have reaffirmed, through the ballot box, the principle that sovereignty belongs to the people, from whom Government derives all its powers, authority and legitimacy, we should all rededicate ourselves to putting service to the interests of the nation above self-interest.

As I assume the Presidency for a second time, it is appropriate for me to renew the solemn vow I made six years ago soon after taking the oath of office:

> "I vow to serve you to the best of my ability and strength, God being my helper. I promise never to sacrifice the interests of Sierra Leone or yours for any other interest or consideration, and I shall strive to ensure that all those who serve you under my direction shall do the same. And so today, and in the succeeding days, I say 'let honesty, unrelenting hard work, love and unity prevail among us'."